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Letter From Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson to Philander C. Knox, February 19, 1912

Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson

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A. M. P.
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Ospina
February 19, 1912.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

The telegram to Du Bois, which had been enciphered, was put on the wire directly I heard from you this morning that you saw no objection to it. Personally I am glad this has occurred. When I received Mr. Ospina's letter and saw that it was in bad taste and offensive in two respects,-- namely, first, because of the impropriety of arguing a diplomatic question in the reply to a semi-official note of courtesy, and second, in hastening to discourage in a rude manner your visit,--I was at once glad to see that Colombia in this way was being placed in the position of repelling an advance from the United States (a very poor position for the postulant to be placed in). Now, by this unheardof impropriety in rushing into print with his note, Mr. Ospina gives great offense in laying himself clearly open to the charge of attempting to interfere in the domestic politics of this country. Instead of perhaps playing into their hands by handing him his passports we took the matter with dignified calm and

with
The Honorable Philander C. Knox,
Palm Beach,
Florida.

with indulgence illustrating our good spirit toward Colombia. Thus we add to a valuable grievance.

From the fine way you spoke offhand of the Colombian affair that day at the club and from our rather near approach to working out a definite solution I had really felt that you could go to Cartagena and, without being specific, could say enough to please and encourage the Colombian people and that thereafter we could perfect the working out of a solution. Now, it seems to me, that if by any chance Colombia should specially ^{invite} ~~notify~~ you to visit Cartagena you might well reply that you had intended to make a friendly visit for the purpose of saying something which you believed would be gratifying to the people of Colombia as a step toward better relations, but that the notoriety given this incident made it now seem to you wiser to abandon the visit and to keep silence as to American-Colombian relations until you might be able ultimately to give to your ideas more concrete form than was now possible, or until the Colombian Government might see fit to open a discussion with the Government of the United States upon bases not wholly impracticable and in a tone more responsive to the spirit of the United States toward Colombia. I mean
that

that something somewhat like part of this might make it more than ever Colombia's move and might give good reasons for further delay during which we could study this excessively difficult problem.

I am very glad that Mr. William Bayard Hale, one of the editors of the World's Work, is to accompany you. I like him very much and he has been thoroughly friendly to our foreign policies and it seems to me a good thing that a man like him, who has extravagantly praised LaFollette and who is disposed to be "progressive", should be on the "band wagon" in regard to your trip.

Herewith I enclose memoranda on the revenues and military expenditures of the Central American republics and also pamphlets from the Pan American Union. I hope the memoranda are satisfactory. Mr. Doyle took with him nearly all of the books which we should have consulted and I think he will be able to perfect the data you desire.

Herewith are copies of all the intimations thus far received (in addition to those which you have) from the governments of the countries you are likely to visit. *All very cordial*

When I know your final itinerary, which I suppose will be reduced from not going up from Amapala to Tegucigalpa and by omitting Cartagena, I intend also to
notify

notify Mr. Bryce, if you intend visiting Jamaica, and Trinidad, and also the Governor of Porto Rico if you intend going there.

Mr. Weitzel's remarks on presenting his letter of credence and the reply of the President of Nicaragua are pretty good and interesting so I enclose copies of them.

You may be interested in the enclosed letter from Mr. Bakhméteff acknowledging your letter with a copy of your note to Germany.

Herewith a memorandum from Mr. Brown giving Representative Rainey's press interview backing up Colombia and also a comment from Mr. Dawson on inaccuracies in the Ospina letter.

Apparently the officers of the "Washington" found means to give out at the Norfolk Navy Yard such ideas of your tentative itinerary as they had got through our consultations with the Navy Department. I trust when you get on board the officers will refrain from indiscreet remarks to the newspaper men.

Please excuse the garrulity of this letter. I have had a frightful day and am dictating it under pressure to be taken at the last moment by Mr. Heintz who goes on the seven o'clock train.

With the

With the warmest regards and best wishes
for the trip, which I feel sure will be a splendid
success, and with compliments to Mrs. Knox, I remain
always

Yours very sincerely,

Huntington Wilson

Enclosures.

